

VARNER ROAD SAFETY PROJECT



Project limits: 0.4 miles North of Bob Hope Dr. to 0.5 miles South of Monterey Ave.

POLICY ON ROAD SAFETY

The Joint Secretary's Policy on Road Safety, implemented by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and the California Health and Human Services (CalHHS), establishes an interim goal to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes by 30% on California roads by 2035. The proactive policy establishes a public health, prevention-first, investment mindset that targets the root causes of traffic crashes, the policy commits to institutionalize the Safe System Approach (SSA) across departments.

STATE PRIORITY SAFETY CORRIDORS



Priority Safety Corridors bring together community partners to deliver proven, upstream safety actions tailored to how people travel. As travel habits do not acknowledge jurisdictional lines or boundaries, this new program provides a streamlined method for multiple state departments to work in

concert with local agencies to implement various safety measures that will reduce severe incidents in areas with the highest risk of crashes.

The Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC) at UC Berkeley conducted an analysis of fatal and serious injuries (FSI) crashes across California from 2019 to 2023, using data from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). The study focused on major roads, highways and main streets and excluded smaller, local byways to better understand safety trends on the busiest routes.

THE SAFETY PROJECT

Varner Road, from 0.4 miles north of Bob Hope Drive to 0.5 miles South of Monterey Avenue, is a Major Collector roadway located in the Coachella Valley of Riverside County spanning 2.3 miles. Between 2019 and 2023, the corridor experienced 17 fatal/serious injury (FSI) crashes, resulting in four fatalities and 25 serious injuries.

Key Crash Trends identified Lane Departure, Unsafe Speed, and Nighttime Visibility as primary crash factors in this area. Of the three pedestrian crashes noted in the data, all occurred during nighttime hours. This mixed-use corridor serves a complex blend of users, from heavy truck traffic utilizing amenities offered at garages, truck stops, and other establishments to local residents and

pedestrians accessing businesses along the corridor. Increasing visibility for all users is paramount to reducing serious incidents on Varner Road.

CalSTA is working with Caltrans and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) to implement the major safety components listed below:

- **Roadway Improvement, such as installing rumble strips, raised medians, longitudinal stripes, and guardrail systems as, well as reducing large driveway widths and limiting on-street parking.**
- **Vision Zero Safety Elements, including upgrades to traffic signal visibility, signage, lighting rehabilitation, high visibility stop signs, and retroreflective backplates.**

While the full project scope and design for the recommended safety improvements are still being developed, CalSTA is committed to supporting CVAG in securing the funding needed to bring this project to life and deliver a safer roadway for everyone. Completion of environmental and design for this project is expected in early 2026. Please see the [Joint Secretary's Policy on Road Safety](#).

